

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 2-6, 8, 9, 11-17, 19-25, 27-35, and 47-52 are pending in the application, with 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32 being the independent claims. Claim 1 was previously canceled. Claims 7, 10, 18, 26, and 36-46 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 37-46 were canceled to expedite prosecution, and Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuation application. New claims 47-52 are sought to be added. Claims 2, 6, 8, 9, 16, 17, 24, 25, 32, 37, and 42 are amended above. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 7, 10, 18, 26, and 36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, to expedite prosecution, the features of claims 7, 10, 18, 26, and 36 have been incorporated into independent claims 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32, respectively. Independent claims 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32 have been further amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the intended embodiments of the present invention. Claims 7, 10, 18, 26,

and 36 have been canceled. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge the allowance of the pending claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 2-5, 8, 11-16, 19-24, 31-35, and 37-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,208,636 to Tawil *et al.* (hereinafter Tawil). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection, and request that it be withdrawn.

As stated above, to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended the features of allowable claims 7, 10, 18, 26, and 36 into independent claims 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection has been rendered moot, and that independent claim 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32 are thus patentable over Tawil. Claims 3-5, 11-15, 19-23, 31, and 33-35, which depend from claims 2, 8, 16, 24, and 32, are also patentable for at least these reasons, and further in view of their own features. Claims 36-46 are canceled. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that claims 2-5, 8, 11-16, 19-24, 31-35, and new claims 47-52, which depend from allowable independent claims 8, 16, and 24, be passed to allowance.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, claims 6, 9, 17, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tawil. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection, and request that it be withdrawn.

Applicants assert that claims 2, 8, 16, and 24 are patentable over Tawil for at least the reasons stated above. Applicants assert that claims 2, 8, 16, and 24, which depend from claims 2, 8, 16, and 24, respectively, are also patentable over Tawil for at least the reasons described above, and further in view of their own features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 6, 9, 17, and 25 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

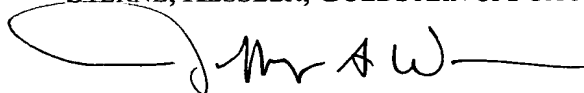
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. S. Weaver', followed by a horizontal line.

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Date: April 27, 2005

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